

Frequently Asked Questions on Proposed Capacity Reductions 2024-25

1. Why is there a need to reduce the number of surplus places across our Primary schools?

Answer

The local authority has a statutory duty to ensure all pupils have access to a high quality school place. To tackle falling school rolls and budget pressures across the borough we need to reduce the number of surplus places. If we do not the sustainability and variety of our schools as well as their ability to maintain high standards will suffer.

2. Why is there less demand for primary school places?

Answer

In common with most London boroughs Haringey has experienced a fall in birth rates in recent years. We have also seen younger families moving out of the borough at a higher rate than before. As a result of this, the number of surplus primary school places has grown to several hundred and is projected to grow further in future years if no action is taken now. Since 2018, between 8-10% of the borough's Reception places went unfilled.

3. What about all the new housing developments planned and recently built – won't they increase demand for school places?

Answer

In recent years boroughs across London (including Haringey) have seen the child yield (the number of children you might expect new housing to be responsible for) decline. There are likely to be many reasons for this including changing preferences, desire for smaller or no families, affordability, moving out of London and the suitability of housing itself.

4. Will this make it harder for me to get the school place I want for my children?

Answer

No. We are only proposing to reduce unfilled capacity in schools where there is a surplus number of places. In 2022, 97% of Haringey primary pupils received an offer from one of their first three preferences and 88% received their first place preference, higher than all our neighbouring boroughs except Enfield (90%).

5. Will this mean I have to travel further to access a school place?

Answer

No. We are only proposing to reduce unfilled capacity in schools where there is a surplus number of places. More broadly the Department for Education define a reasonable travelling distance for a primary school place to be 2 miles. Most of our parent/carers usually travel a much shorter

distance than this for their primary school place due to the number of primary schools in Haringey and the fact that Haringey is relatively compact London borough.

6. Will teaching standards be impacted?

Answer

We are proposing these reductions in capacity to maintain high standards across all of our primary schools by ensuring that school funding is maximised. Reducing capacity so that the balance between pupil numbers and the costs of running a school are more equitable should help to maintain high standards. Conversely, running schools with continued high surpluses of pupil places will undermine school finances and have a negative impact on teaching standards as resources are put under more strain.

7. How are schools funded and why are pupil numbers so important?

Answer

Schools are funded according to the number of pupils they have whereas the costs of running schools is largely determined by the number of teachers employed and other fixed costs. When class sizes fall below 24 (a full class is 30) schools find it harder to meet their fixed costs. Therefore it is essential that a school is run with class sizes of at least 24 pupils per teacher.

8. My children are already attending one of the schools where reductions are proposed. What is the benefit of reducing capacity for my children?

Answer

Please see the above answer. The main benefit will be in ensuring the future sustainability of your school and its financial health.

9. Are you seeking to reduce the capacity of those schools with poor standards?

Answer

No. Almost all Haringey primary schools are Ofsted rated Good or Outstanding including the 8 schools that have been selected for this proposal.

10. Has the council considered not making these reductions in capacity?

Answer

No. The main alternative to reducing school capacity would be to close specific schools in the borough. This would have a negative impact on the variety and choice of Primary schools across Haringey and would also impact the ability of the council to fulfil its statutory (legal) duty to provide more school places if and when demand for them picks up.

11. Why are you consulting and how will your responses inform any decision-making?

Answer

We are consulting to address any questions and fears that parents, carers, pupils and other stakeholders may have. Where applicable, we will aim to address and mitigate the concerns that this consultation may uncover.

12. If most responses to the consultation are against reducing capacity how will the council take these views into account?

Answer

Please see the above answer. We will have to reduce capacity at a number of our primary schools but hope to allay any fears that parents, carers, pupils and other stakeholders may have.

13. What are the next steps?

Answer

In February 2023, the council's Cabinet will consider the results of the consultation and make a final decision on the proposed admission arrangements for 2024/25. If approved, the arrangements would be introduced for September 2024 entry, however, we intend to approach the Office of the Schools Adjudicator (OSA) for approval to amend the PAN of the schools with effect from September 2023 thereafter.

14. Why have you chosen these 8 specific schools for reducing capacity?

Answer

We have evaluated those schools that have had and currently have the largest numbers of surplus places. We have also considered which schools are best located (regarding other schools and local levels of demand) and spoken to School Heads and Governors. This has been a collaborative process and we have the support of the proposed schools.

15. What do the forecasts for future school places show?

Answer

The [2022 School Place Planning report](#) features the very latest projections from the Greater London Authority. It suggests that demand for Reception places at Primary schools in Haringey is going to decline from around 2,800 to around 2,600 by the end of the decade. This is in addition to the large surpluses we have seen in recent years.